ISLAM

By

SEYYID SAEED AKHTAR RIZVI



TEHRAN - IRAN

In the Name of Allah,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

O' Allah! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.

Dear Reader,

The book you now have in hand is one of the many Islamic publications distributed by this Organization throughout the world in different languages with the aim of conveying the message of Islam to the people of the world.

You may read this book carefully and should you be interested to have further study on such publications you can contact us through a letter. Naturally, if we find you to be a keen and energetic reader we shall give you a deserving response in sending you some other publications of this Organization.

You may express your views on this publication and the subject matter discussed in it, and how far you have benefited from it or which part of the subject matter has proved useful to you and your environment. You will be able, in this manner, to introduce yourself as one, of our good and active reader.

Meanwhile, you can keep our address at the disposal of your friends and those individuals interested in Islamic Studies.

Publication Secretary,
WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES,
(WOFIS).

CONTENTS

FOREWORD TO THE SIXTH EDITION

The present book is a series of lectures delivered at the Makerere University College, Kampala (Uganda) by eminent scholar and highly respected Chief Missionary of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. This edition has been revised by the author and is distributed to readers by his kind permission.

The first edition of this book was published in 1967 by the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats of Africa, Mombasa (Kenya). Prior to that, it was published as a pamphlet in Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), and as a booklet in Manchester (U.K.).

The unique aspect of this book is its intensive subject matter presented in a very

lucid way which includes such important subject on Principles of Religion as *tawhid* or belief in Divine Unity; *`adl* or Divine Justice; *nubuwwah* or Prophecy; *imamah* or the Imamate, belief in the Imams as successors of the Prophet; *ma'ad* or Resurrection.

In view of this, World Organization for Islamic Services has translated this book into French, Italian, Indonesian, Burmese and Hawsa languages; and has distributed them to more than eighty countries of the world.

Scholars and intellectuals striving for truth can greatly increase their knowledge by studying this book.

We feel it necessary to extend our thanks and a deep sense of appreciation to the author for his efforts, and to Bilal Muslim Mission, the first publishers of this book.

Lastly, we pray to the Almighty Allah, for the success and achievement of all people who search for the truth and strive for reality.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

1st July, 1977

13th Rajah, 1397



In the Name of Allah the Beneficent,
the Merciful

SALIENT FEATURES

Now let us begin with the salient features of this faith. hly sect, like other sects of Islam, consists of some beliefs and some religious obligations. Its social life is based upon some well-defined ethical patterns. It has fully developed civil as well as criminal laws. All these aspects of religion are based upon the Holy Qur'an (The Book of Almighty Allah) and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet and Imams.

Every religion has a history; its present cannot be separated from its past; and its past influences its present trend of thinking. You will agree with me that it is not possible to deal with all these aspects of Shi'ah Ithna `Ashari sect in one lecture. So, with your permission, I will limit this discussion to the beliefs in particular.

In our terminology the faith is called the `Root' (usul) of the religion, and the religious performances are named the `Branches' (furu') of religion. These terms are very significant because they show the relation between `Faith' and `Deeds,' from our point of view. As no tree can survive without its root, so no prayer can be said to be alive without faith. And, as no tree can bear fruits without branches, so no faith can be of much help without good deeds.

The Roots of our Religion are Five:-

1. ***Tawhid*** (Unity of God)

2. *'Adl* (Justice of God)

3. *Nubuwwah* (Prophethood)

4. *Imamah* or Imamate (Successorship of the Prophet)

5. *Qiyamah* *(Day* of Judgment)

I. "TAWHID" - UNITY OF GOD

Belief in Allah and His Unity. The belief in the Unity of God is the foundation stone of Islam. This belief governs the religious faith, designs the social patterns and gives life to the moral codes.

The first sentence of the Islamic *kalimah*, i.e. "There is no god except Allah," leads a Muslim throughout his life not only in religious matters but in social behaviour also. "There is no god" shows a Muslim that nothing in the Universe is superior to him. It is observed in Qur'an that:

هُوَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ...
(البقرة: ٢٩)

"He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth . . . " (2:29).

So a Muslim knows that nothing in this world is to be worshipped. Neither stone nor trees; neither animals nor human-beings; neither the Sun nor the Moon nor the Stars can be worshipped; because everything is created, and created for his benefit. When a Muslim, thus, has rejected every falsehood and every idea of Nature-worship, Idol-worship or Human-worship, he is ready to believe in the positive truth of the Unity of God. Believing in a Supreme being gives an aim to our life and provides a purpose for our actions. Had a man been left with the wrong impression that there was no God at all, his life would have been aimless, and an aimless life is dangerous. So it is added that there is no god "except Allah." This sentence has a negative as well as a positive aspect. Both are instrumental in creating the belief that every man is equal to every other person. When nobody is superior, nobody is inferior. Thus, the belief in the Unity of God promotes the sense of brotherhood and equality and equity which is another feature of Islam.

Now allow me to explain other aspects about the belief in the Unity of God:-

We believe that God is Omnipotent and Omniscient. He was there when there was nothing. Nothing except Him is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. He knows everything. Even our unspoken intentions and desires are not hidden from Him. We believe that He has no partner, no advisor, no helper. He has no son, no daughter, no wife. He is above every need, because need presumes deficiency. He has no body, because body needs space. He is nowhere, because He has no body; and He is everywhere, because His power and knowledge is magnificently apparent everywhere. He cannot be defined in terms of Time and Space. He cannot be incarnated, because incarnation needs body and space. He cannot be seen because of the same reason.

When we say that Allah is Omnipotent and

Merciful, we do not mean that His Power and Mercy is something different from His Person. We see that a child is born without any power, and then he acquires strength day by day. It is so because power is not his person. Allah is not like this. He is Power Himself; Mercy Himself; Knowledge Himself; Justice Himself; Virtue Himself; Truth Himself and so on.

The proper name which we use for God is 'ALLAH' and that also needs some explanations. 'ALLAH' means `One who deserves to be loved' and `Into Whom every one seeks refuge.' This word, grammatically speaking, is unique. It has no plural and no feminine. So this name itself reflects light upon the fact that Allah is one and only one; He has neither any partner nor any equal. The name cannot be translated by the word `GOD' because God can be transformed into `gods' and `goddess.'

2. *'ADL* - JUSTICE OF GOD

This was a short sketch of onr belief in Allah. Now we come to the second Root of Religion and that is "Justice of Allah." Frankly speaking, this root of religion is the most important one to study, if anybody wants to know the real and basic difference between Sunnis and Shi'ah Ithna `Asharis. So far as the existence and Unity of God is concerned, it comes under the First Root *`tawhid,"* that is, "The Unity of God." But the actions of Allah come under this second root; and here the differences are vast and manifold: Here I propose to show the differences in a few words:-

i) First and foremost difference is that while certain Muslim sects hold that nothing is good or evil by itself; and only what Allah has commanded us to do, is good; what He has

forbidden is evil. The Ithna `Asharis on the other hand, believe that irrespective of religious commandments, there is real merit or demerit in different courses of action, and it is because a certain thing is good that , God commands us to do it; and because the other thing is bad that lie forbids it.

ii) Stemming from the above mentioned difference is the fact that the Shfahs believe that Allah never acts aimlessly; i.e. without any purpose or design. All His actions are based on wisdom and intelligent purpose, though we may not know them. The Sunnis on the other hand, say that there is no real demerit in acting aimlessly, and if Allah does anything without purpose, the mere act of Allah will make that action good.

iii) The Shi'ah Ithna `Asharis say that if a person can do good to any other person and he does not do it, it is against the virtue. Likewise,

they say that if Allah can do anything beneficial to His creatures and then, suppose that, He does not do it, it will be against Virtues of Allah and not commendable. Therefore, the Ithna `Asharis say that: "It is morally incumbent upon Allah to do every act of Grace dealing with mankind."

Here is a quotation from our book of beliefs:-

"By Grace is understood that action on the part of Allah which would help to bring His creatures nearer to His devotion and obedience and facilitate their moral correction (which is) morally incumbent on Him i.e. GOD. Allah has commanded us to be just, while He Himself treats us with something better, namely Grace *(tafaddul).* Justice *(al-adl),* means that He requites a good act with a good reward and an evil act with a punishment. The Prophet said: `No man ever enters Paradise by virtue of his good actions alone except by the Mercy of

Allah.' " (*I`tiqadatu 'l-Imamiyyah,* by ash-Shaykh as-Saduq)

The Sunnis, on the other hand, do not belive that lulf i.e. Grace is incumbent on Allah. They say that even *adl,* i.e. Justice, is not incumbent on Allah, even if He sends good and virtuous persons to Hell, it will be quite right.

iv) Then comes the most vital difference between Ithna `Asharis and Sunnis, i.e. the question of *jabr'* (compulsion) and *`ikhtiyar'* (choice). The position of Sunnis in this respect, according to general belief, is that:-

"No act of any individual, even though it be done purely for his benefit, is independent of the will of Allah, for its existence; and there does not occur in either the physical or the extra-terrestrial world the wink of an eye, the hint of a thought, or the most sudden glance, except by the decree of Allah, of His power, desire and will.

This includes, evil and good, benefit and harm, success and failure, sin and righteousness, obedience and dis-obedience, polytheism and true belief." (al-Ghazzali).

We the Ithna `Asharis on the other hand say that we know the difference between falling down from a roof-top and coming down by ladders. The second act is done by our power, will and intention; while the falling down is not done so. And we know that our own actions are not like falling down from a roof-top; but they are like climbing down with our own will and power. Therefore, they are our acts and they cannot be attributed to Allah.

Again we see that we are praised or blamed for some of our acts, while for other acts we are neither praised nor condemned. It means that the first category comes within our power and will; and the second is beyond our power and will. We may be advised to treat our ailments

in such and such a way, but we cannot be advised to recover from the illness. It means that getting treatments is within our power; but getting recovered is not within our sphere of activities. Therefore, we say that there are many things and aspects of life which are within our own power and will, while some are not within our power. Those things about which we can be ordered to do or not to do, for which we can be advised, for which we can be praised or blamed, all those acts are within our power and will. And as the commandments of religion come under this category, therefore, it is wrong to say that our sins or righteousness, our obedience or disobedience or polytheism or true belief, are by the decree of Allah. Therefore it has been written in the book of our creed that:

"Allah possesses fore-knowledge of human actions, but does not compel mankind to act in any particular manner. When Allah will collect His servants on the Day of Resurrection, He will

ask them concerning what He had enjoined on them and will not question them concerning what He had destined for them." (*I`tiqadatu 'l-Imamiyyah).*

But it does not mean that man is quite independent of Allah. In fact, the power and will to act as we like is given to us by God. Thus, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: "There is no compulsion (by Allah); nor is there absolute delegation of power (from Allah to man); but the real position is between these two extremes." *(ibid.)*

And at what point does our ability to do things start? Imam Musa al-Kazim (p.b.u.h.) said: "A man acquires that ability when four conditions are fulfilled: 1. When there is nothing to hinder his plans; and his 2. health and 3. faculties (needed for that work) are upto the required standard; 4. and God provides him the occasion of that work. When all these conditions

are fulfilled a man becomes able to act according to his own free will." When asked about an example, he said: "Let us suppose that there is a man, without any hinderance, of good health and strength; yet he cannot commit adultery unless he finds a woman. When (the 4th condition is fulfilled, and) he gets a woman, then it is upto him to choose one of the two alternatives - either he controls his evil emotions and saves himself as Joseph did; or, on the other hand, commits adultery; if he protects himself from that sin, it will not be by compulsion of Allah (as some people think), and if he commits the sin, it does mean that he was above the power of Allah (as others think)."

According to our point of view, if anybody believes in predestination, he cannot, at the same time, believe in the Day of Judgment. Because, if Allah decrees every act which is done on our hands, then it is gross injustice to inflict punishment upon us for those sins and evils and

polytheism and disbelief and immoralities which were predestined by Allah Himself.

NEED OF RELIGION

As you are aware, man is a social animal, every man is- dependent on millions of people for his life and its necessities. And you know that every society needs some laws to prevent injustice and preserve the rights of every member of the society. But who is the right person to make the Laws? One man? (Be he a monarch or a dictator.) No! Because he, instinctively, will look, first of all, after his own interest. A group of people? (Be it an aristocracy or democracy.) No! Because every one of them is capable of wrong judgment; and a lot of wrong decisions do not add up to a right decision. Also, it is apparent that no group of people can disengage itself from self interest.

Moreover, you will agree with me that no man or group of men is in a position to make a comprehensive law based on perfect equity and justice. So it is necessary that the laws should be made by someone who is superior to man, who has nothing to loose or gain by that law and with Whom every man has equal relation. And that one is "Allah." Hence the need of religion.

ALLAH

Allah can do no wrong. I do not use this phrase in the sense of "King makes no mistake." Because "King makes no mistake" means ac tually that he does nothing at all; he just signs what is passed by the Parliament. So this tribute is based upon 'in-action.' But "Allah does no wrong" means that He is active and powerful but He can do no wrong. Anybody who commits wrong or injustice does so either because he does not know that it is wrong, but Allah knows every

thing; or because he needs something which cannot be obtained without wrong-doing, but Allah has no need; or because he has been compelled by somebody else to commit that wrong, but Allah is Ommipotent and nobody can compel Him to do anything. So, logically it is impossible for Allah to do any wrong or commit any injustice.

We believe that Allah created man so that he may acquire those virtues which may bring him nearer to Allah in the life hereafter. Man comes in this world like a blank paper. During his life time, various designs appear upon it by the effect of his works and deeds. Virtues acquired are like beautiful designs; and the vices are like monstrous drawings.

We believe that Allah has given the man wisdom, will and power to acquire the virtues. lie has shown the man the right path, and has warned him against going astray. But fie has not

compelled him to do good works nor to commit vices. He has given him power to do as he wishes.

We believe that the actions of Allah are intended for the benefit of His creatures. May be, a man who is repairing his roof, feels annoyed because of heavy torrents of rain. But rain is intended for the common benefit; and even the person who at this particualr time feels annoyed by it, will derive benefits from it in the long run.

Even such so-called disasters as earthquakes and floods are for common benefit. We deem it as disaster, because we do not know its ultimate purpose. We are like a man who has never seen a house being built. He comes to a city and sees earth being dug out, stones being cut and broken, trees being felled, and he just wonders why all these destructions!, In his eyes, it is destruction, because he does not know its ultimate result. But in fact, it is construction and not destruction. Likewise, we are unaware of the ultimate

result of a particular earthquake or flood. So, we say it is disaster, but if we look backwards, we see that the present good condition of the Earth is, mainly an outcome of the very so-called disaster. Geography and Geology bear testimony to these facts.*

But now arises another question. There is no denying that these acts of God, though intended for common benefit, cause inconvenience, hardship and even death to hundreds and thousands of people. Is it not injustice against those victims of those disasters? Why should they be sacrificed for the benefit of

---

* It is only one of the causes of these natural phenomena. Sometimes, a hardship or disaster is intended as a warning to mankind or a group or individual; at other times it may be just a test to a person's spiritual virtues to see his submission to the will of Allah. It might have been, in earlier times, a punishment to the mankind for its unabated sins (like flood of Noah), but such punishments have been expressly discontinued after the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

others? To understand it clearly, we should remember that death on this Earth is not the end of life. We die here to live another life which we call "Life Hereafter." Every inconvenience in this insignificant life will be rewarded for in the life hereafter. In fact, the troubles in this world, like the World itself, are not lasting; while their rewards in the form of the Grace of Allah in the life hereafter are everlasting. As we believe in the life hereafter, in the presence of Allah, we appreciate that the troubles and disasters of this world are not `Injustice.' Instead, they are Mercy of the greatest magnitude.

It will not be out of place to mention here that most of the beliefs (mentioned under this second root of religion) are specialities of Shi'ah Ithna `Ashari sect. Other sects in Islam differ from us in these beliefs. In the past, they gave us (together with the Mu'tazilites) the name "*al-`adliyyah*" that is "Believers in the Justice of God." For instance, they say that human beings

are not the actual doers of their acts. They believe that their actions are done by Allah Himself. Man is only an instrument to perform the actions of Allah. But even then he is responsible for those actions which were performed by Allah upon his hands. But we say that it is gross injustice to make a man commit robbery and then inflict punishment for that felony to commit which he was compelled by the Judge himself.

Now for some things which are more or less common in all the sects of Islam and which are connected with this topic. We believe that Allah does not give us any command which is beyond the limit of our power. We believe that every instinct and desire has been created in the man for some reasons. These instincts or desires should not be crushed but harnessed for the general benefit of the mankind. For instance, sexual desire has been embodied in human nature by Allah Himself. To crush that instinct will be

a protest against the Creator. It should not be, and cannot be crushed but of course, its function should be regulated for the benefit of mankind. And hence the necessity of marriage.

Likewise, fear and desire are natural instincts and should be ultilized for human upliftment. A Muslim is taught not to fear anybody or anything except ALLAH, and not to desire anything in thisworld, but to be anxious to receive the Grace of Allah.

3. *NUBUWWAH* - PROPHETHOOD

As I have said before, society needs rules and laws to preserve peace and justice, that the law cannot be free from inequities unless it is given by Allah. But I have told you earlier that Allah cannot be seen, He cannot appear Himself before human beings to give them His law. Therefore, Allah appoints somebody to represent Him on the earth. That Viceregent of Allah is called "Prophet." As a mirror has a bright side to receive light and another side to reflect that light, so a Prophet has the highest spiritual purity which enables him to receive the divine message and a human body which enables him to communicate that message to his fellow human beings. The purpose of Prophethood is two-fold: First to bring people nearer to Allah and the Second to bring peace and happiness in the world.

According to our belief, all the Prophets were infallible and sinless. Suppose that there is a man who, just like ourselves commits or can commit sins or wrongs, and then such a man claims that he has been sent by Allah as a Prophet to lead people on the right path. Naturally, the people cannot believe that what he says is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; because his every word is liable to be wrong. So he cannot command unreserved respect and undoubtable obedience from his people. Therefore, to carry out the mission of Allah, it was necessary that the Prophets be infallible and sinless.

The Prophets were given miracles as their credentials. Miracles, according to our belief, are such performances which are not impossible, but which cannot be done without apparatus, medicine or practice. But the Prophet performs them without any practice and without any machinery. Curing the blind persons or lepers

is not impossible. But Jesus Christ cured them without any medicine, and that was his miracle. Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) had innumerable miracles, but his greatest living miracle is the Qur'an.

When Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) went to heaven in his life time and narrated the happennings after his return, his enemies said, "How was it possible to go to heaven with body?" But we believed from the beginning that if an infallible Prophet says that he did go to heaven, it was not impossible. Now the recent advent of science has proved that we were right. Where scientists are trying to go by space-ships Muhammad (p.b.h.a.h.p.) went without any aid from any machine and that was his miracle.

The Qur'an says that Allah sent Prophets in every part of the world. Their basic Faith was the same. According to common belief, one hundred twenty-four thousand prophets were sent by

Allah from time to time. Adam was the First of them and Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) was the Last.

Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) brought Islam which is the last Divine Religion and which cancels all previous religions. Islam is intended for all the world without any distinction of colour or origin. Islamic teachings are embodied in Qur'an which is the Book of Allah. It was revealed to Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) in the course of twenty-three years of his Prophethood.

LIFE SKETCH OF PROPHET

A brief sketch of the life of the Prophet of Islam will not be out of place here. Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) was born in the year 570 A.D., at Mecca. He was the only son of `Abdullah and Aminah. His grandfather,`Abd al-Muttalib son of Hashim was a Chief of Quraysh. `Abdullah,

father of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.), died about four months before his birth and he lost his mother when he was in his sixth year. The charge of the orphan was undertaken by his grandfather, who also passed away when Muhammad (p.b. u.h.a.h.p.) was eight years old. `Abd al-Muttalib at the time of his death, entrusted the boy to the care of his son, Abu Talib, who was poor but very respected person. Abu Talib and his wife, Fatimah hint Asad showered upon Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) more love and care than they ever did for their own children.

From his early childhood till the age of forty, Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.) showed all the noble traits of highest human character that commanded respect from everyone who knew him. The Arabs conferred on him the title *"as-Sddiq al-amin"* (The Truthful and Trusted One). At the age of twenty-five he married a noble lady, Khadijah, who gave birth to his only surviving child, Fatimah, the Lady of Paradise.

At the age of forty he was called to the mission of Prophethood by Allah. The first to accept his call were those who were nearest to him in the daily life. Khadijah, his wife, was the first to accept Islam. His cousin, `Ali, son of Abu Talib, was his first male follower. Then come the names of Zayd ibn Harith, Abu Bakr, Arqam and so on.

The propagation of Islam, at first was a secret mission. But three years after the first revelation, came the command:-

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ (الشعراء: ٢١٤)

"And warn your nearest relations" (26:214)

Having got this command, the Prophet ordered `Ali to prepare a feast. When all the members were assembled and the feast began, the Prophet said, "I have been sent to you by Allah and I have brought to you the good tiding for this world and for the life hereafter. Who among you will help me in this great task? Whoever accepts this responsibility will be my *wazir* (vizier), my brother and my successor." No body came for-

ward, only `Ali stood up and said "O! Prophet of Allah! I will help thee and I am ready to sacrifice everything on thy command." Three times the Prophet asked them the same question and three times it was only `Ali who gave assurance to help him with all his power. At last the Prophet declared: "O! People of Quraysh! Listen to me! Here is `Ali who is my *wazir*, my brother and my successor. Listen to him and obey him." The people left the place cutting jokes with Abu Talib, father of `Ali, telling him he should obey his own child. The coming years proved that it was not a laughing thing.

The hurling of open denunciation at the ancestral idols of Quraysh by the Prophet set all Arabia ablaze. The resentment, at first, let them to approach his uncle and guardian, Abu Talib, to persuade him to silence his nephew. Abu Talib conveyed their message to Muhammad. Muhammad replied: "Uncle dear, even if they place the Sun in my right hand and the Moon in

my left hand in order to turn me away from the work which I have been entrusted by Allah to do, I will not listen to them." Saying this he burst into tears. Abu Tglib said: "Go in peace, my son! and do what thou wilt for, by God! I will not abadon thee." This decision of Abu Talib infuriated the Quraysh. As a last attempt they approached Muhammad himself. They told him: "If your ambition is to acquire wealth, we will amass wealth for you as much as you may ever desire; and if you are aspiring for power and honour, we are prepared to accept you as our King and overlord; and if you have any fancy for beauty, you shall have the hand of the fairest maiden in the land." Muhammad's reply was short and clear: "Neither I want wealth nor do I want power or beauty. I have been commissioned by Allah as a warner to the mankind, I am communicating His message to you. If you accept it, you shall have facility in this life and the life hereafter and should you reject it, verily, Allah will decide between you and me."

So began the bitterest persecution of Muslims in the first years of its birth at the hands of the Meccans. Islam was making slow but steady progress. At the same time, the persecution and the torture of the poor Muslims was growing in its intensity day by day. The Prophet ordered some eighty Muslims of both sexes to seek refuge in the Christian country of Abyssinia. Ja'far, the third son of Abu Talib was the leader of this caravan. Negus, the Ethopian King of that time received them with honour, and as the history says, after a short period, he himself became converted to Islam. Africa can be proud of the fact when Islam was being persecuted in the land of its origin, Africa gave shelter to the poor Muslims, and whenever any list of the Muslim Kings will be prepared, the name of Negus, the African king, will be on the top.

After seven years of these atrocities, Quraysh decided to boycott Banu Hashim, the

family of Muhammad, because they had persistently refused to disown him. Three years of the cruelest hardships passed and Banu Hashim suffered such tortures which were beyond human endurance. At last, the Quraysh themselves were ashamed of their inhuman behaviour, but still they did not lift the ban. Then a miracle occured and the ban was lifted after more than three years.

Shortly afterwards, as a direct result of these sufferings both Abu Talib and Khadijah died. Just at the time when Muhammad stood sorely in need of the protection of his loving uncle and the comfort of his wife, the hand of death snatched them both away from him. Now Quraysh had a free hand in dealing with Muhammad and his followers. And they lost no time in deciding that Muhammad should be killed on a certain night. Muhammad under the divine guidance, asked `Ali to sleep in his bed to keep Meecans unaware of his absence, and he

left Mecca to Medina, 280 miles from Mecca. Abu Bakr accompanied him on his own accord. This epoch-making event in the history of Islam marks the beginning of the Muslim Era, called *"Hijrah. "*

The Meccans did not let Muhammad remain in peace even at Medina. They waged war after war against him. After six years of continued anxieties, Muhammad concluded a peace treaty with Meccans on apparently humiliating terms, in order to keep peace in the land. But the Quraysh violated even that treaty within two years. Now seeing that there was no alternative left, Muhammad marched and made a bloodless entry into Mecca, from which, eight years before, he had fled a hunted fugutive. The Meccans, remembering fully well their own dark past and shameful record, were apprehensive of him. But they were surprised to hear the Prophet speaking: "There is no reproof against you. May Allah forgive you, for He is Merciful and Loving; Go,

you are free."

Three months before his death, the Prophet went for his last pilgrimage to Mecca. In the return journey he ordered the caravan to halt at a place named Khumm. It was a place where several routes met. It was mid-day and the Sun of Arabia was pouring its full heat upon the parched earth. A temporary platform was prepared for the Prophet and he delievered a long *Khutbah,* (lecture) at the end of which he asked the Muslims: "Have I not more authority upon you than you have got upon yourselves?" All of them responded by saying: "Surely O Messenger of Allah!" Then, the Prophet took the arms of `Ali, and showing him to the audience, declared:



"Whomsoever I am master, `Ali is his master too."

Saying it, he took the arms of 'Ali and showed to the audience. Then he ordered them to go and greet 'Ali as their *Amir (i.e.* Leader and Guide). Less than three months after this declaration the Prophet died at Medina.

The announcement at Khumm: The detailed account is given in, besides hundred of books, *Kanz al-'ummal,* the famous book of traditions, (vo1.6, pp.390, 397 & 399) and *Khasa'is (by* an-Nasa'i, p.48). From these accounts the following words of the Prophet-should be copied here:-

"Remember! I am leaving behind among you two most precious things - One of them is greater than the other - i) The Book of Allah, which is the rope of Allah from the heaven upto the earth, and the other ii) My Descendants who are my family-members. So look how you deal with them, and verily, both will not be separated from each other until they come to me (in

Qiyamah) at the *Kawthar. . .* Verily, Allah is my Master and I am Master of every believer." Then he took the hands of `Ali in his hands and said: "He whose Master am I, `Ali is His Master. . ." This tradition, jointly and severally, are narrated, in every book of tradition which is worth its name.

There is no argument about the fact, though some Muslims try to interpret it in some other way, but the fact is undisputed. The famous Scholar of *Ahl-i hadith* (generally known as *al- Wahabiyyah)* Nawwab Siddiq Hasan of Bhopal, says: "Hakim Abu Saeed says that the traditions of "two most precious things" and "Whose Master am I, `Ali is his Master" is *'mutawatir'* i.e. narrated by so many people that no doubt can be entertained about its **authenticity,** because a great number of the companions have narrated it, so much so that Muhammad ibn Jarir has written these two traditions by 75 (seventy-five) different chains. *(Minhdj al-wusul,*

page 13).

I have left many events in the life of the Prophet because most of them are common knowledge. Here I have mentioned only those events which, though commonly narrated in Arabic histories, traditions and commentaries of Qur'an, are not known, for one reason or another, to non-Arabic-speaking public.

******

4. *IMAMAH* -IMAMATE

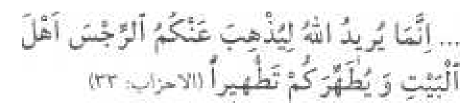
Now I want to explain our stand about the `Fourth Root of Religion' that is "Imamate." Imamate means `Leadership.' Here it means "Succession to the Prophet."

We believe that it is necessary for a Prophet to be infallible and sinless, so it is necessary for his successors to be infallible and sinless. The same reason and proofs which are put forward for infallibility of prophets can be put for infallibility of his successors. Otherwise, nobody will believe that the interpretations of the Book of AIlah and the directions about religion which come from Imam, are true interpretations and right directions. Here it should be made clear that an Imam is not entitled to change the

commands of Qur'an or concepts of religion. Imim is the defender of Faith. His work is to preserve it, not to change it. Islam and Qur'an as brought by Muhammad (p.b.u.h.a.h.p.), are the last Divine Religion and last Divine Book. Nothing is to be added to it, nothing is to be taken away from it, nothing is to be amended in it. And it is the duty of Imam to see that the commands of Qur'an are respected and the path opened by the Prophet is followed.

I was telling you that an Imam, like Prophet, should be infallible. But nobody can know anything about another person. A man may. have an excellent character, but nobody can be sure that he cannot commit any mistake at any time. Only the Creator of the man knows whether a man is infallible. And as we receive message of Allah through the Prophet, it is with the words of the Prophet that we can know the

real nature of a man. According to the Qur'an and accepted traditions of the Prophet, there were three men, after the Prophet who were sinless. First of them was `Ali, who was declared by the Prophet as his successor in Khumm. Other two were Hasan and Husayn, sons of `Ali and Fatimah and grandsons of the Holy Prophet. There is an *ayah* (verse) in Qur'an which says:



11 . . . Verily, Allah intends but to keep off from you *(every kind of)* uncleanliness, O People of the House! and purify you a thorough purification " (33:33)

Both the Sunnis and the Shi'ahs agree that `Ali, his wife Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn are definitely included in the title "People of the

House (of the Prophet)." The Sunnis, however, add the names of the wives of the Prophet in it, but the Shi'ahs do not agree with it. Anyhow, according to Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet and the commentaries of Qur'an it is clear that `Ali and his two sons were infallible and sinless.

The verse of "Purity": When I said, "Shi'ahs do not include anyone else in the verse of Qur'an," I made an under-statement. In fact, many Sunni Scholars also have said the same thing. They also do not include anyone else.

I would like to quote Mawlana Wahid al-Zaman, the famous Sunni Scholar, whose translation and commentary of Qur'an as well as his book Anwar *al-lughah* (being the dictionary of Qur'an and Traditions) are among the recognized reference books. He writes in his commentary of Qur'an about this *ayah*

"Some think that it is especially for those family members who had blood relation with the Prophet, i.e. `Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn. The present translator, (i.e. himself), says that correct *(sahih)* and well-connected upto Prophet *(Marfu)* traditions support the same view, because when the Prophet himself has declared that my family members are these only, then to accept it and believe in it becomes obligatory. And one more sign of correctness of this view is that the pronouns used before and after this verse are those for females, while in this verse are those for males. It appears that this verse has been placed between the verses connected with the wives of the Prophet. Perhaps the companions (who compiled the Qur'an) did so according to their own *`ijtihad'* (independent judgment)." *(Tafsir al-Wahidi,* on the margin of the translation of Qur'an, by the same author, printed at Gelani Press, Lahore, par.22, p.549, Foot-note No.7)

Again he says in his dictionary of Qur'an and Traditions (*Anwar al-lughah,* par-22, p. 51): "The correct view is that in this *ayah* of `Purity' only these five persons are included (i.e. The Prophet, `Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn), though in the usage of Arabs, the word *Ahlu'l-Bayt*' is used for wives also. Some people prove by this *ayah* that these five persons were sinless and *masum* (infallible). But, if not `*ma'sum'* then, of course, they were `*mahfuz'* (Protected from committing any sin or error) surely."

I have quoted two references (though I do not agree fully with him in some of his assertions) just to show that not only the `Ithna `Asharis but the learned men of Sunnis also confirm that, according to the rules of Arabic Grammer and according to the correct unbroken traditions of the Prophet only `Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn are included in it, besides the Prophet himself. Also it is clear that our claim that these persons were sinless, is shared by the Sunnis

scholars also. It is apparent that the least they can say is that they were not infallible (theoratically) but were protected from sins and errors (practically).

But infallibility is not enough. According to our belief, as the Prophets were chosen by Allah to carry on His mission, so their successors also should be appointed by Allah.

It may be mentioned here that there are some more conditions for Imamah, but I have mentioned here two of them only i.e. Infallibility and appointment by Allah through the Prophet, because these two conditions are the most important of all.

Now I think I should throw some light on the question of our Imams' appointment by Allah. As I have mentioned earlier Prophet made a promise to `Ali (which was in fact a command of Allah) in the early days of Islam that he

would be his successor, and that promise was fulfilled in Khumm when the Prophet declared that all the believers were to accept `Ali as their Master just as they accepted the Prophet as their Master. `Ali was the man who was chosen by the Prophet to sleep in his bed and offer himself for sacrifice when the Prophet left Mecca. He was entrusted to return the articles of the Meccans which were deposited with Muhammad (p.b.u.h. a.h.p.). `Ali was the man whom the Prophet declared twice as his brother in this world and the life hereafter. It was `Ali, his wife and his children who were selected by the Prophet to represent Islam against the tribe of Najran. It was about `Ali that the Prophet said: "I am the city of knowledge and `Ali is its gate." It was the famous saying of the Prophet that: "`Ali is from me and I am from `Ali." It was to `Ali that the Prophet said: "Thou hast the same position with me as Aaron had with Moses."

Thus it is clear that so far as `Ali is

concerned the question of infallibility and appointment from Allah are settled once and for ever. Even the Sunnis do not challange the authenticity of these traditions and events, although they might differ in interpretations.

After the death of the Prophet the Muslims split in two groups; Sunnis and Shi`ahs. The Shi'ahs, as mentioned above believe that `Ali was the first Imam appointed by Allah, declared by the Prophet. The Sunnis believe that Abu Bakr, a father-in-law of the Prophet, was his first successor. They call them "Caliphs." Abu Bakr was elected by some people at the time when most of the Muslims were attending the funeral of the Prophet. But there was the ancient tribal custom of Arabs that when a man was accepted as Chief even by some of the members of the tribe, others accepted him as such without grumbling. When it was known that Abu Bakr had been elected as Caliph, the majority of the Muslims followed him, according to the old rule.

The second Caliph, `Umar ibn al-Khattab was not elected but nominated by the first Caliph. `Umar, at the time of his death appointed a committee of six persons and said that they should select one amongst themselves, and, the third Caliph, Osman, thus came to power. Their sixth Caliph, Mu'awiyah, came to power by military strength. So the Sunnis following these precedents, believe that a Caliph can be regarded as a legal successor of the Prophet if he is either elected or nominated, or selected by a committee or if he gains power by military strength.

But we, the Shi'ahs, do not think that these are the right methods to determine the succession of Prophet. We say that these methods may be useful to settle the claims for a King's throne, but not correct for setting a man on the Prophet's pulpit. According to our belief, only Allah, who appointed the Prophet, has the right

to appoint his successors.

There are many traditions of the Prophet in which he has proclaimed the number and even the names of his successors whom we call `Imams.' There are the accepted traditions of the Prophet that `Imams after me will be twelve.' Isma'ilis, and perhaps Zaydis, do not believe in it; but the Ithna `Asharis, get support in their belief from the Sunnis, who have these traditions in their books of traditions called *'Sihah.'* They also record the tradition that: "The day of Judgment will not come unless these Twelve Imams come in this world."

Also there is a tradition recorded in Sunni books (e.g. *Kifayat al-athar* and *Rawdat al-ahbab* of al-Muhaddith Jamal ad-Din) which gives, the names of these Twelve Imams as foretold by the Holy Prophet. It is narrated by Jabir

ibn Abdallah al-Ansari, companion of the Holy Prophet; and is as follows:-

When the *ayah* of the Qur'an was revealed.



". . . Obey Allah and obey the Messenger *(of Allah)* and those. invested with authority among you. . ." (Qur'an, 4:59).

Jabir asked the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah! We know Allah and His Prophet; but who are those persons invested with authority whose obedience has been joined by Allah with that of yourself?"

The Prophet said: "They are my Caliphs and the Imams of the Muslims after me. First of them is `Ali, then Hasan, then Husayn, then `Ali son of Husayn, then Muhammad son of `Ali (who has been mentioned as Baqir in Torah).

O Jabir, you will surely meet him; when you see him, convey my *salaam* (greetings) to him. He will be succeeded by his son Ja'far as-Sadiq (the Truthful), then Musa son of Ja'far, then `Ali son of Musa, then Muhammad son of `Ali, then `Ali son of Muhammad, then Hasan son of `Ali. Then his son whose name and patronym (*kunyah) will* be the same as mine. (He will be) *`Hujjat Allah'* *(i.e.* the Proof of Allah) on the earth and *`Baqiy-yat Allah'* (the one spared by Allah to maintain the cause of faith) among His servants. Mohammad ibn al-Hasan ibn `Ali. He it is on whose hand Allah will open (conquer) the world east and west; he it is who will remain hidden from his followers and friends so long that the belief in his Imamate will remain only in those hearts which have been tested by Allah for the Faith."

Jabir said: "I asked him, `O Messenger of Allah! Will his followers benefit from him during his Seclusion?'"

The Holy Prophet said: "Yes! By Him Who sent me with Prophethood! They will be guided by his Light and benefit by his wilayah (Love: Obedience) during his seclusion just as people benefit from the sun even when it is hidden in the cloud. O Jabir! This is from the hidden secrets of Allah and the treasured knowledge of Allah. So keep it secret except from its people (who deserve to know)."

The Ithna `Asharis believe in those Twelve Imams, and hence, the title "Ithna `ashariyyah" which means `Belonging to Twelve.'

Some people ask: Why this particular number `twelve'? But anyhow any number may be objected to. Can anybody explain why Jesus Christ selected twelve Apostles from among his desciples? Why was this number so important that when Judas betrayed Jesus and Jesus went to heaven, the remaining Apostles wanted to make up their number? And most important of

all, why that twelfth Apostle was not elected by the majority of the Christians or by the Apostles themselves? Why his appointment was left in the hands of Allah and the Holy Ghost? All of this shows that representatives of Allah were never elected by the people, they were selected by Allah Himself. If any religious leader is elected by people; then he will work `for people' and not for Allah.

These Twelve Imams are not creation of our fancy. The Bible says that God had promised Abraham:

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply , him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, an) I will make him a great nation" (Genesis, 17:20).

These Twelve Imams are the promised Princes who are respected and loved even by

those who do not accept them as their Imams.

Our twelfth Imam was born in 256 (Hijrah). His life was in great danger. So he made such arrangements that only selected persons were allowed to meet him. He also appointed four representatives, one after another, to act on his behalf. The last of them was `Ali In Muhammad Simmari. When he was on his death-bed, he received a letter from Imam, saying, ***inter alia:-***

"O `Ali ibn Muhammad Simmari! . . . You are to die within six days from now: therefore, wind up your affairs and do not make any will nominating anybody to take your place after you, because now the Total Seclusion has begun and I will not re-appear until Allah (May His Name be glorified) allows; and it will be only after a long period when the hearts will become hard and the earth will become full of tyranny."

He died, as foretold, on the sixth day, and the Imam is now secluded from all. For the religious guidance, during this period, the Imam has made the following arrangement:-

"In the events which happen (to you) refer to the narrators of our traditions; because they are my proof (authority) upon you, and I am the Proof (authority) of Allah.

Also, our eleventh Imam had given the following command:-

"And whoever among the religious scholars (jurists) saves his Self (from sins), protects his religion, opposes his desire, obeys the command of his Master (i.e. Allah) then the masses should follow him (do his taqlid)."

According to that command, we follow in religious matters the greatest *`Alim* of the time, keeping in view the other qualities also and we

call them `*Mujtahids.'* At present our greatest *Mujtahid is* in Iraq; his name is al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim al-Tabataba'i.* He lives in Najaf where `Ali, our first Imam, is buried. Najaf is the greatest centre of our religious learning. It is a living institution where the finest deliberations of highest quality on religious matters are carried on day in and day out. Those of us who desire to obtain the highest knowledge of religious laws, go there. The teachings system, according to my information, is unique in the world. There a subject is taken, the teacher is on the pulpit, the students are sitting on the floor, the teacher explains the sentences of Qur'an pertaining to that particular subject, in the light of commentaries and language; then the traditions of the Prophet and Imams are explained in the same way; then the rulings of past scholars are put before the audience and then all the issues concerned are analysed and explained by the teacher. No".

He expired in June, 1970. Now al-Sayyid al-Sistani of Najaf, is the greatest living Mujtahid.

the students explain why they agree or disagree with the teacher on the particular issue. The arguments are, sometimes, prolonged for days and even weeks. At last, the issues are settled by the teacher in the light of Qur'an and Traditions. Now they are ready to take up another subject. That institution is called *`ijtihad'* which literally means `striving;' and here it means `striving to reach to the correct ruling in religious jurisprudence, according to the Qur'an and traditions of the Holy Prophet and Imams.'

Financial strength or political power is not the basis of religious authority. How many Prophets of the Old Testament had had political power? How many Apostles of the New Testament had financial stability? The foundation rock of the Christ's Church, Peter Simon, was an ordinary fisherman. Therefore, I think that you will agree with me that religious leadership is not derived from wealth or political power.

In short, according to our thinking, an Imam is appointed by Allah, and it is because of that appointment that he gets the right to govern the Muslim ummah . But that governance is not the basis of his Imamate. Our Sunni brethren, on the other hand, treat that governance as the basic factor and accordingly the right of religious leadership is derived from the political power.

QIYAMAH- DAY OF JUDGMENT

Now some words about the fifth root of religion and that is the `Day of Judgment.' It is the common belief of all Muslims that one day Allah will bring life to every human being and he will be judged according to his belief and actions. A man having true faith and doing right deeds will receive the Grace of Allah and will be sent to Paradise where he will find contentment according to his spiritual qualities. Persons having the wrong kind of belief will be punished in Hell. A man having right belief but doing wrong actions will be either forgiven by Allah and sent to Paradise straight away or punished at first and then sent to Paradise.

It is impossible to deal with this topic here in detail, but it will be sufficient to say that all this depends upon so many things and all those

things depend upon the Mercy and Justice of Allah.

BRANCHES OF RELIGION

Now allow me to give here a short list of some of the `Branches of Religion.' These are called *`ibadaat* or `Worship of God.' According to Islam even alms-giving is an act of worship. However, the most important branches of religion are ten in number:.

First of them is ***`salat,'*** that is, the prayers five times a day and special prayer on Fridays and `id (Islamic festivals) days and some other occasions.

Second is ***`sawm,'*** that is, fasting during Ramadan.

Third is ***`hajj,'*** that is a special pilgrimage to Mecca once in life-time.

Fourth *is 'zakat,'* that is giving for the pleasure of Allah a portion of gold, silver, cattle and farm produce.

Fifth is *`khums,'* that is giving 20% of the net income of the year after deducting the lawful expenses of the year.

Sixth *is jihad,'* that is the holy war. This topic requires some explaination. Islam does not like to exterminate wrong-doers, it wants to remove the wrong. Evil deeds are like disease. They need treatment and every doctor wants to cure the ailments with medicines as far as possible. But sometimes the ailment reaches a stage where no medicine can do any good; he feels that surgical operation is necessary if the life of the patient is to be saved. Then he decides, not happily but reluctantly, to ampute one or more limbs of the patient. It may cause hardest pain for the

time being; but it is not torture, it is mercy.

Likewise, suppose that this humanity is a compact body, some of its parts become infected with spiritual disease and every medicine of sympathetic persuasion and rational pleading has failed. And there is a danger that their infection is causing and inflicting hardships upon other parts, and the spiritual doctor, I mean the Prophet or Imam who is guided by Allah, is confident that now the surgical operation is essential to save other parts of mankind from trouble. Then, and only then, he will order a Holy-War; and then also it will be limited to that part which is most necessary to remove.

But even if you feel that there is necessity of a surgical operation you will never entrust this most dangerous task to an unauthorized person. It will be a very foolish and irresponsible action. You can never be satisfied that the operation is essential unless a qualified doctor

tells you so. Therefore, according to Ithna-`Ashari law, a war cannot be started unless specifically authorized by the Prophet or Imam himself, and that also to the limits prescribed by that Representative of Allah. After all, life is a creation of Allah and it should not be destroyed unless it has been authorized to do so by a Representative of Allah. Accordingly, the Holy-War is forbidden for the Shi'ah Ithna `Ashari during the period when our Imam is hidden from us. The Prophet himself never started any war unless it was thrust upon him by the enemies. A study of the map of Arabia will show the actual facts. As I have mentioned earlier, when the Prophet took refuge in Medina, the Meccans became infuriated because they could not satisfy their anger against him. So they made repeated attacks on him. The battle places of three important wars will tell the story. The first was *`Badr'* was fought at Badr in the second year of Hijrah. Badr is 30 miles from Medina and 220 miles from Mecca. Is there any doubt that

the Meccans were the aggressors? The second war named *'Uhud'* was fought next year at Uhud. Uhud is 3 miles from Medina and 247 miles from Mecca. Three years after Uhud, Medina was surrounded by Meccans and Jews for about one month. They had come 250 miles from Mecca to attack Medina. Is there anybody who can say that the Prophet should not have fought in self-defence? The first ayah of Qur'an permitting the war, after fourteen years of continual oppressions, speaks for itself. Qur'an says:-

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا ...
(الحج: ٣٩)

"Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war has been thrust, because they are oppressed ... " (22:39).

Regarding those wars which were fought after the death of the Prophet to conquer neighbouring countries, everybody knows that

our Imams had nothing to do with them. Our Imams were the right authority to allow or disallow those wars. But they had no political power. And all those wars were fought without their authorization. So, according to the Ithna-`Ashari law, all such wars were political manoeuvres; they were not Holy-Wars or Religious Jihad. And Islam is not responsible for them.

To discourage such unauthorized wars, it is laid down that any booty obtained in such wars will not belong to the fighters. Instead, all of it will vest in the Prophet or Imam, as his personal property; and he may dispose it according to his own discretion. The Holy Prophet sometimes in such circumstances used to return the booty to its former owners. But if it appears to the Imam that the enemy might use that returned booty against Islam, he will not return it at all and use it according to his discretion. That is why it has been declared as his own property to keep his hands free.

This is our law about the Holy-War, Self-defence is permitted at any time. But to start a war is forbidden without specific authority of the Prophet or Imams. Holy-Wars cannot be started for political or worldly gains.

Seventh and Eighth of the branches of religion are **(i) To propagate good works** and **(ii) To desist others from bad deeds** and evil doings.

Ninth and Tenth are **to love the Holy Prophet, his daughter Fatimah and the Twelve Imams;** and **to remain aloof from their enemies.**

THE END